

Message Text

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20

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 TRSE-00 CEA-01 FEA-01 SS-15

ERDA-05 AID-05 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FPC-01

H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04

USIA-06 SAM-01 OES-06 SP-02 STR-04 ACDA-07 IO-13 /113 W

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R 241544Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5027

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 8300

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: ENRG, PFOR, TS

SUBJECT: OPEC PRICE DECISION: REPRESENTATIONS TO GOT

REF: STATE 282460 AND 278391

1. (BEGIN SUMMARY) USG POSITION REGARDING OPEC PRICE DECISION AT DECEMBER MEETING IN DOHA HAS BEEN RAISED BY AMBASSADOR, E/C COUNSELOR AND VISITING DESK OFFICER WILKINSON IN DISCUSSIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS OVER LAST EIGHT DAYS. GOT OFFICIALS REGISTERED UNDERSTANDING OF U.S. POSITION OPPOSING ANY PRICE INCREASE AT THIS TIME AND EMPHASIZED THAT GOT VOICE IN REGIONAL AND LDC COUNCILS, THOUGH NOT LOUD ONE, WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT NON-CONFRONTATIONAL APPROACH TOLNORTH-SOUTH ECONOMIC ISSUES AND MODERATION IN SPECIFIC RESPECT TO OIL PRICING. LATTER POSTURE, HOWEVER, GENERALLY VIEWED BY GOT OFFICIALS AS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH UP TO TEN PERCENT OPEC PRICE INCREASE. NO SPECIFIC UNDERTAKING GIVEN TO PROSELYTIZE DC POSITION AMONG OPEC MEMBERS. (END SUMMARY)

2. ON NOVEMBER 23, E/C COUNSELOR MONTGOMERY AND WILKINSON FOLLOWED UP INFORMAL TALKS AT HIGHER LEVELS WITH SPECIFIC DEMARCHE TO MFA NORTH AMERICAN CHIEF MOHAMED BEN REDJEB.
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LATTER, WHO UNDERTOOK TO REGISTER U.S. POSITION

WITH OTHER GOT OFFICES, CITED TUNISIAN SOLIDARITY WITH POORER LDCS AND SPECIAL GOT SENSITIVITY, TO NEED FOR GOOD ECONOMIC HEALTH IN DCS, SUCH AS ITALY, UPON WHICH TUNISIA IS SUBSTANTIALLY DEPENDENT FOR TOURIST AND EXPORT MARKETS. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED GOT DESIRE TO PRESERVE NON-CONFRONTATIONAL ATMOSPHERE OF NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE TO PURSUE GRADUALLY LDC ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES. HOWEVER, BEN REDJEB ALSO STRESSED THAT TUNISIAN VOICE IN ARAB/AFRICAN COUNCILS CARRIES LESS WEIGHT ON ECONOMIC THAN ON POLITICAL ISSUES, THIS WEIGHT BEING ROUGHLY COMMENSURATE WITH TUNISIA'S MODEST ROLE IN OIL PRODUCTION. NOTING LARGER INCREASES SOUGHT FOR INSTANCE BY IRAN, BEN REDJEB ALSO MAINTAINED VIEW THAT FIVE TO TEN PERCENT OIL PRICE INCREASE WOULD NOT BE IMMODERATE AND PROBABLY COULD BE TOLERATED BY WORLD ECONOMY. LATER IN DAY, IN CALL ON MFA DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION HAMED AMAR, MONTGOMERY AND WILKINSON REITERATED USG CONCERNS, AGAIN EMPHASIZING THAT WE HOLD NO OIL PRICE INCREASE TO BE JUSTIFIED AT THIS TIME.

3.

3. EARLIER, AMBASSADOR ON NOVEMBER 19 INFORMALLY RAISED OIL PRICE ISSUE WITH M'HAMED ESSAAFI, ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF MFA (THIRD-RANKING OFFICIAL), EMPHASIZING IMPACT ON NON-OIL LDCS AND CONCERN TO PRESERVE ATMOSPHERE PROPITIOUS TO CONTINUING EFFECTIVE USG ROLE IN MIDDLE EAST.

4. ON NOVEMBER 15, MONTGOMERY HAD TAKEN SIMILAR APPROACH IN CONVERSATION WITH SALAH BOURGINI, FOREIGN MINISTER'S DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR REGIONAL AND MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS. BOURGINI, WHO IS SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL CHARGED WITH MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC POLICY (INCLUDING CIEC, UNCTAD, AND COMMODITIES), EXPRESSED SPECIAL GOT INTEREST IN AVOIDING RETURN TO PRODUCER-CONSUMER CONFRONTATION AND IN PRESERVING ATMOSPHERE CONDUCTIVE TO NEWL.U.S. ADMINISTRATION'S CONTINUING POSITIVE USG ROLE IN SEEKING MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.

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